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Nos. 14-556, 14-562, 14-571, and 14-574

In the Supreme Court of the United States

JAMES OBERGEFELL, ET AL., PETITIONERS
v.
RICHARD HODGES, DIRECTOR, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, ET AL., RESPONDENTS

ON WRITS OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT

BRIEF OF *AMICAE CURIAE* DAWN STEFANOWICZ AND DENISE SHICK IN SUPPORT OF RESPONDENTS

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(Additional captions listed on inside cover)

VALERIA TANCO, ET AL., PETITIONERS

v.

BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE, ET AL., RESPONDENTS

APRIL DEBOER, ET AL., PETITIONERS

v.

RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN, ET AL., RESPONDENTS

GREGORY BOURKE, ET AL., PETITIONERS

v.

STEVE BESHEAR, GOVERNOR OF KENTUCKY, ET AL., RESPONDENTS

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STATEMENT OF INTEREST OF *AMICAE CURIAE*[1]

Dawn Stefanowicz[2] and Denise Shick,[3] are writing this amicus brief in support of Respondents, to ask that the Court respect the original definition of marriage as between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. Our interest here is for three key reasons. Firstly, our interest is due to our diverse personal, professional, or social experiences with our fathers, their same-sex sexual partners and associated gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual subcultures during the first 30 years of our lives.

Secondly, our interest in this case is due to the review of the (mostly flawed) same-sex parenting research and social science research. Thirdly, our interest is based on continuing direct communications with many adults from GLBT households.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Dawn Stefanowicz, who has testified to many legislative bodies about the damage same-sex parenting can do to children, had a highly abusive homosexual father who exposed her and her siblings

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[1] No party or its counsel wrote or helped write this brief, or gave money intended to fund its writing or submission, *see* S. Ct. R. 37. Blanket permission from Respondents to write briefs is filed with the Court, as is a letter of permission to *Amicae* from Petitioners.

[2] Dawn Stefanowicz, author of Out From Under: The Impact of Homosexual Parenting (Redemption Press, April 1, 2014, and Kindle, Redemption Press, June 16, 2014) (2007).

[3] Denise Shick,co-author with Jerry Gramckow of My Daddy's Secret (Xulon Press, Feb. 2008).

to a frightening and physically dangerous environment by his lifestyle. Her father's companions acted in inappropriate ways around her brothers. Dawn was deeply hurt by her father's lack of comprehension of how to raise a female child, a daughter, in a proper and nurturing way.

Denise Shick had an extremely violent and abusive transgender father who beat her and inappropriately touched her. Yet perhaps the worst thing he did was to fail to provide a fatherly, male role model, instead living out a "female identity" called "Becky" and dressed as a woman.

It is difficult to be a child of same-sex parents, for reasons including sexual or gender confusion; forced approval of certain sexual lifestyles; and commodification of children.

In Canada, free speech has suffered greatly due to government pressure to conform to a narrow line on GLBT issues.

Similarly, a *de facto* censorship limits accurate expression on GLBT issues in scholarly venues.

And adult children of same-sex parents are often marginalized or insulted when, after years of not fully realizing how much they missed by not having a mother or a father, they then speak out publicly about the damage from same-sex parenting.

Having a transgender parent can lead to deep pain, confusion, and not being comfortable with one's own gender during the difficult time of growing up.

In all, redefinition of marriage to include mandatory legalized same-sex marriage will hurt the Nation and its coming generations. The Court should let each State's people decide whether to take such a

drastic step, rather than the Court imposing it on each State.

ARGUMENT

Our position against same-sex marriage is determined based on our review of the research on marriage and parenting as well as communications with other adult children who grew up in "alternative" households, involving at least one parent who had same-sex relationships. Due to the long-term negative impact experienced by these children, the widespread political correctness and silencing about the impact on children, the threats to livelihoods and relationships, only a small number of adult children have gone public.

I. GROWING UP IN A "GAY" HOUSEHOLD: DAWN STEFANOWICZ

I thank the Court for this opportunity, by the way. I would like to mention that I am an internationally recognized speaker, author and media spokesperson.[4]

Years ago, I, Dawn, began communications with adult children with a gay or lesbian parent – most adult children wanted to remain anonymous. Adult children marked by an * I personally communicated with and received permission to post each of their stories to my website since 2006: Lee Taylor*, Debbie Smith*, Mitzy Lancaster*, Dolores Oliveira*, Jeremy Deck, Jakki Edwards*, Denise Shick*,

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[4] For some information about me as media guest, *see INTERVIEWS with Dawn*, http://www.dawnstefanowicz.org/documents/INTERVIEWSwithDawnS_010.pdf.

Charles Mitchell, Suzanne Cook* and Nathan Bell*. (See our stories at http://www.dawnstefanowicz.org/ourstories.htm (last visited March 21, 2015).)

I acknowledge that children are impacted long-term by various family structures and living arrangements. I here address the impact of legislation affecting children, and I have advocated for children and families, pertaining to marriage, parenting, sexuality and education. Internationally, my testimony has been submitted to the Australian Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Standing Committee and to Argentina's senators. I have addressed party leaders in Paraguay. I testified at the Canadian Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on hate crime legislation in 2004. Also, I provided testimony to: Canadian Members of Parliament regarding same-sex marriage and the government committee reviewing Age of Sexual Consent law. And I have provided testimony in U.S. States: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Florida, Iowa, Maryland and Washington. As well, my amicus brief was filed with the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.[5]

Only my testimonies where hyperlinks are available are listed:

A. Submitted Testimony, Dawn Stefanowicz (though my name, as with some other testifiers, is not listed on the website *infra*),

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[5] Br. of Amicus Curiae Dawn Stefanowicz Supporting Defs.-Appellants and Supporting Reversal (Aug. 4, 2014, revised Sept. 21, 2014), in *DeLeon v. Perry*, No. 14-50196 (5th Cir.), oral arg. Jan. 9, 2015 (975 F. Supp. 2d 632 (W.D. Tex. 2014)):

Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009, The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, Nov. 26, 2009, Commonwealth of Australia;[6]

B. Witness, Dawn C. Stefanowicz, Bill C-250, to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda), Parliament of Canada, Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Issue 4 - Evidence for Mar. 17, 2004, Ottawa, Canada;[7]

C. Brief submitted by Dawn Stefanowicz re Bill C-22, an act to amend the Criminal Code on age of protection and to make consequential amendments to the Criminal Records Act, *cited by* the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, House of Commons, Apr. 17, 2007, Number 060, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, Ottawa, Canada;[8]

D. *Connecticut General Assembly's Judiciary Committee Public Hearing—Testimony by Dawn Stefanowicz March 26, 2007*;[9]

E. *Dawn C. Stefanowicz, Public Hearing of the Judiciary Committee on the Marriage*

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[6] *Available at* http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/2008-10/marriage_equality/report/index (last visited March 20, 2015, as with all other Internet links herein, except where noted).

[7] http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/373/lega/04eva-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=3&comm_id=11.

[8] http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=2834262&Language=E&Mode=1.

[9] *Available at* http://dawnstefanowicz.org/docs/R000326-DawnTMY.pdf.

> *Amendment, Boston, Massachusetts*, Apr. 11, 2006.[10]

Dawn Stefanowicz: I was born in Toronto, Canada and grew up with a homosexual father, his same-sex sexual partners, exposed to the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender) subcultures, during the first 30 years of my life. I loved my father absolutely.

I am always compassionate towards men and women who struggle with their sexuality/gender identity. Many of us children who grew up under the GLBT umbrella struggle with sexuality confusion too; *see, e.g.*,

> Cameron's (2006) hypothesis that gay and lesbian parents would be more likely to have gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure (of sexual orientation) sons and daughters was confirmed. Percentages of children of gay and lesbian parents who adopted non-heterosexual identities ranged between 16% and 57%, with odds ratios of 1.7 to 12.1, depending on the mix of child and parent genders. Daughters of lesbian mothers were most likely (33% to 57%; odds ratios from 4.5 to 12.1) to report non-heterosexual identities. Data from ethnographic sources and from previous studies on gay and lesbian parenting were re-examined and found to support the hypothesis that social and parental

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[10] *Available at* http://www.voteonmarriage.org/leghearing.shtml#dawn.

> influences may influence the expression of non-heterosexual identities and/or behaviour. . . . The results confirm an evolving tendency among scholars to cite the possibility of some degree of intergenerational crossover of sexual orientation.[11]

My father grew up in a violent alcoholic home where he was verbally, physically and sexually abused by older male relatives. As an adolescent, he had male sexual partners. Though my father initially married my ill and passive mother, it was during my infancy that my father brought boyfriends into our home, one who lived with us until I was almost six. Both my twin brother and I were sexually abused by our dad. By age 3, I unconsciously turned away from Dad to look for a substitute for father's love, and in later years, looked for boyfriends.

Along with nightmares and a major speech impediment for 7 years, sleepless nights, challenges academically, decades of depression and suicidal ideation, I felt unworthy of love. Peer relationships were difficult for me. It was constantly stressful around my father and his partners. Dad spent most of his attention on his male lovers. I never felt safe and secure at home.

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[11] Walter R. Schumm, *Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexuals? A reply to Morrison and to Cameron based on an examination of multiple sources of data*, 42 J. of Biosocial Sci. 721 (2010), Abstract, *available at* http://www.researchgate.net/publication/45274042_Children_of_homosexuals_more_apt_to_be_homosexuals_A_reply_to_Morrison_and_to_Cameron_based_on_an_examination_of_multiple_sources_of_data.

For a little girl to grow up in a gay home and GLBT subcultures damages her sense of femininity and budding womanhood. Women are not the primary recipients of love and kindness; male and female are not considered equal and necessary.

I wasn't surrounded by average heterosexual couples. Dad's partners slept and ate in our home, and they took me along to meeting places in the GLBT communities. I was exposed to overt sexual activities like sodomy, nudity, pornography, group sex, sadomasochism and the ilk. There was no guarantee that any of my Dad's partners would be around for long, and yet I often had to obey them. My rights and innocence were violated.

At nine, I was deeply grieved to find out that two of my father's partners committed suicide after Dad rejected them. Even Dad was suicidal and used prescription sleeping pills for years.

When I was about nine, Dad took me to the downtown sex shop, and to see the work of gay artists, which sometimes symbolized phallic art. He'd take me to nude beaches and public parks where gay men met. If the police were coming, they'd tip one another off and stop sexual activity. The gay community was quite informed about their meeting places for sex across North America, including: public beaches, gay bars, bathhouses, mall restrooms, back alleys, gyms or even parks where children played. My father cruised all over Canada. He also loved coming to the United States for vacationing and cruising; his favorite cities included

San Francisco, New York, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale.

This was before the Internet age's "online gay hookup" or "cruising" sites, when men regularly visited the gay bars and bathhouses.

As owner of an executive recruiting agency, my father also kept an apartment near his downtown office where he could meet someone for quick sex. My father liked well-dressed, "clean-cut" men, who were about 10 years younger than he was.

Once, when I was in the 10th grade, my father attended my school's band performance briefly. I saw his eyes widen when he saw all the teenage boys performing on the stage with me. He suddenly disappeared. I was heartbroken that he was really there to pick up young men.

At times, my father would tell me what to wear to dress provocatively and we'd go out cruising. I didn't like being treated as an object, but I wanted to spend time with him. Ultimately I was seeking his love and acceptance. He sometimes would fondle my breasts, questioning if I was wearing a bra. This would upset me. I was not allowed to freely question him, bring up moral arguments, or hurt his feelings, or I would face long-term repercussions. Very few pictures were taken of my family. Rather, there were nude pictures of my father and his partner standing in the washroom and hallway of our home. The pictures were discovered by my twin brother, taped under one of the drawers of a dresser my father had given him. Unfortunately, I do not have happy gay family pictures to show the Court.

The dangerous road my father and his sexual partners walked included: mental anguish, psychological impact and physical health risks. Some of my father's partners committed suicide when relationships soured. They often had alcohol and drug addictions and were isolated from family members. Many of them had sexually-transmitted diseases, lost many partners, had shortened lives and died of HIV/AIDS. I still grieve the loss of these men.

It was not a safe place for children. As a child, you're at high risk of exposure to particular pathogens which can be passed on surfaces. These surfaces include: shared utensils and dishes, toothbrushes, linens and towels. As a little girl, I picked up whatever razor was left lying around in our washroom and began shaving my legs - even if it belonged to one of Dad's partners.

Gay sex is messy. I would see and sometimes launder dirty bed sheets, covered with sperm, feces and lubricant, on occasion. I never saw condoms. During my teens, I became ill for a few years; and my father sent me to a medical specialist who treated gay men. My blood was tested; afterwards, I was told to rest.

A few years ago, I told my physician about my father. My doctor sent me for extensive blood tests required for high risk groups, such as gay men and prostitutes. Test results showed I had been exposed to pathogens.

My father said that one or more of his partners may sexually abuse my brothers; yet, my father continued coming home with different men. It was

normal practice for gay men to approach young adolescent males for sex. When I brought home a 14-year-old male friend, my father and his boyfriend approached him for sex.

Different men would come to live or visit with us for a time. They had sex all over the house: in the washroom, hallway, my brothers' and my bedrooms, and the recreation room and attic.

A fatherless 18-year-old artist came to live with us (my father also had sex with his younger brother who weeks later committed suicide). They'd go out cruising. Men came home for group sex. My younger brother, unable to cope, was in trouble with the law, dropping out of school in grade 9.

My twin brother witnessed a lot, including group sex and gay porn. By his late teens, he attempted suicide. Growing up, these events harmed us in many ways. I had a twisted view of sexuality, gender, marriage and did not want to marry or have children. While still a girl, it seemed better if I had been born a boy—Dad even encouraged me to dress manly and wear men's cologne. I felt very stressed and afraid. I never knew what my father and his partners would do next, where they would go or whom they would meet up with. His relationships were unstable. Even when partnered, my father and his partner would still cruise for sex with other men.

One evening, my father threatened that he would put me in blood, because my twin brother and I had checked out a university outside of Toronto, Canada. I was devastated and very afraid for my life. Later, he hit me with his hand because I called him a

homosexual, a term I spoke to describe my father's sexual relations.

In my twenties, after marrying my husband and moving out of Toronto, I reached out to my father, trying to forgive him and seek reconciliation. My father shared more than I was allowed to share. We would talk on the phone until he was too tired to speak. Our visits were emotional for me, especially the last one. I was able to hold his hand while restraining tears, speak a few words, until it became unbearable. My father died of AIDS in 1991. Shortly afterwards, I completed final accounting exams and began therapy.

II. INSTABILITY OF GAY HOUSEHOLDS

Over 50 adult children from "alternative" households, plus spouses/ex-spouses with children and other family members have contacted Dawn.

It is quite difficult to discuss the implications of growing up in a gay household until later in adulthood when we have developed a measure of personal identity and independence apart from our GLBT parent, partners and the subcultures. By then, we have often made academic, career and major relationship decisions.

We are often forced to approve and tolerate all forms of expressed sexuality, including various sexual and gender identity preferences. Though fostering and adoption, and more recently, at-home insemination kits, artificial reproductive technologies, egg and/or sperm donors and surrogacy are ways we can end up with gay parents, most of us were conceived heterosexually.

The varied family forms, living arrangements and imposing cultural values play havoc on us as children. Our home environments have unique and unstable characteristics, making it difficult to classify adult children into narrow and restrictive categories for research purposes, especially for gay parenting studies.

These unstable characteristics include the presence and/or absence of the following: a. biological parent(s), b. legal parents/guardians (incl. foster/ adoptive parents), c. parents' sexual partners, and d. number of different residences.

As well, parental marital status can vary: a. single, b. cohabiting with one or more boyfriends and/or girlfriends, c. married, d. divorced and/or e. widowed.

Children may have lived with one or more parent(s) and/or one or more parental sexual partner(s), during some or all of our childhoods, in one or more residential settings.

Imagine what it is like for a child to have multiple parents, which includes your father's and/or mother's new sexual partner(s) who may go before the court to request to be "legal" parents, so that you as a child have to split weekends, holidays and Christmases in different residences with different "family" members (who do not get along or talk with each other) based on your parents' current and previous sexual partners.

Your childhood is divided to please the adults (whether or not they are called your "parents"). Now, these adults have argued about where you live, who you visit, what schools you attend, which doctors you see, what medical procedures you have, and what

faith/religion you practice. You are often forced, against your conscience, to call dad's or mom's sexual partners: daddy or mommy or special nicknames. "Family" can involve related siblings, half-brothers or sisters, step-siblings, biological parents, other "legal" parents and dad's and/or mom's past and current sexual partners.

My father had a lot of sexual partners, some of whom lived in our home. Other lovers only visited, staying for meals and overnights. At least three of my father's partners could have requested to be my "legal" parents, since they had some care-taking role in my everyday life, even if that meant cooking, cleaning or providing a tip for homework or babysitting, similar to what an auntie or grandma would do.

When children of gay parents grow up and have children of our own, there often is little to no intergenerational support available for us, especially if our parents had multiple sexual partners, mental and physical health issues, domestic violence issues, or died young.

Same-sex marriage treats children like traded commodities, purposely depriving them of their biological mother and/or biological father. Children lose forever knowing and relating to their natural mom and/or dad. Children's identity and security are robbed forever: What child does not need to know his or her biological ancestral roots, next-of-kin and genetic and familial characteristics (such as physical appearance, medical history, disposition, ethnic and religious origins and other qualities)? Same-sex marriage purposely deprives children of their right

to their natural father, natural mother and roots of origin.

III. WARNING TO AMERICA: CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS RESTRICTED

It is a lie when you hear, "Permitting same-sex couples (also throuples) access to the designation of marriage will not deprive anyone of any rights." When same-sex marriage passed in Canada in July, 2005, parenting was immediately redefined, removing parentage from its biological origins. Canada's gay marriage law, Bill C-38,[12] included a provision to erase the term "natural parent" and replace it across the board with gender-neutral "legal parent" in federal law. Now, all children have "legal parents," as defined by the state, which means parental rights are have been usurped by the government.

In effect, same-sex marriage permits state powers to override the autonomy of biological parents and deprives children of their own rights to natural parentage. Consequently, parents experience state interference when it comes to moral values and teachings about family, parenting, and sex education in schools.

Additionally, since the undefined term "sexual orientation" (i.e., sexual practices) was added as a protected category under Canada's hate crime law in

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[12] *Available at* Mary C. Hurley, *BILL C-38: THE CIVIL MARRIAGE ACT*, Parliament of Canada (Royal Assent: 20 July 2005. Statutes of Canada S.C. 2005, c. 33), revised Sept. 14, 2005, http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/LegislativeSummaries/bills_ls.asp?ls=c38&Parl=38&Ses=1.

2004 and same-sex marriage became legalized in 2005, guaranteed fundamental freedoms of the Canadian Constitution: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have been reinterpreted, eroded and or nullified by activist courts and quasi-courts with no real juries, also known as "human rights tribunals" or "human rights commissions".

Freedom to assemble and speak *freely* about man-woman marriage, family and sexuality are restricted. Activists often sit in on religious assemblies, listening for *anything discriminatory towards GLBT*, so a complaint can be made to the "human rights bodies". Thus, most faith communities have become "politically correct" to avoid fines and loss of charitable status.

For an example of legally-circumscribed free speech about homosexuality-related issues in Canada, *see, e.g.*, Craig Takeuchi, *Anti-abortion, anti-gay activist Bill Whatcott admits defeat in Canada*, The Georgia Straight, Mar. 13, 2015, 2:56 p.m.,[13]

> It's bye-bye (and good riddance) to anti-abortion and anti-gay activist Bill Whatcott, who is calling it quits in Canada.
>
> The social conservative activist (and his ministry) has an extensive history of Canadian legal battles and human rights complaints.

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[13] http://www.straight.com/blogra/411046/anti-abortion-anti-gay-activist-bill-whatcott-admits-defeat-canada (last visited March 21, 2015).

> In 2003, his nursing license was suspended in Saskatchewan and he was fined $15,000 for protesting at a planned parenthood clinic. The ruling was overturned by an appeals court and the Supreme Court of Canada.
>
> In 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled his pamphlets were in fact hate speech. (Examples of his flyers are included in appendix B of the Supreme Court judgment.)
>
> He was arrested in April 2014, along with Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, at the University of Regina. They continued to distribute leaflets against homosexuality and abortion after being asked to leave the campus by officials. However, he was found not guilty of mischief.
>
> . . . .
>
> In [a] blog post, he also admits his failure to achieve his goals: "I have to concede defeat in my primary objectives of securing a robust level of free speech for my social conservative brethren and in activating large numbers of Christians to take a public stand against the homosexual agenda."

Id. Even those who disagree with his ideas may wonder why he was so oppressed by Canada's government in disseminating them.

Canadian media is restricted by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the media censoring arm of government and similar to the FCC. If the media air anything considered discriminatory towards GLBT, broadcasting licenses can be revoked, and "human rights bodies" can charge fines and restrict future airings. Now, does America want to lose her liberties and freedoms like Canada has?

IV. POLITICAL CORRECTNESS & SCIENCE

Censorship exists within the social sciences, academia and governmental institutions. Most often, politically incorrect research is not funded and articles are not published in professional journals. Doctors Wright & Cummings, both leaders in their field of psychology (past presidents of divisions in the American Psychological Association) and admittedly advocates of a progressive social and political agenda, state the following in their book, *Destructive Trends in Mental Health*:[14]

> [A]dvocacy for scientific and professional concerns has been usurped by agenda-driven ideologues who show little regard for either scientific validation or professional efficacy. Although I am in agreement with many of APA's stances, I am opposed to the process that has diminished its credibility. It is no longer perceived as

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[14] *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path to Harm* (NA Cummings & RH Wright eds.), New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.

> an authority that presents scientific evidence and professional facts. The APA has chosen ideology over science, and thus has diminished its influence on the decision makers in our society.

Id. at pp. xiv and 308.

Warren Throckmorton, Ph.D., exposes the underhandedness of the APA in his article, *On the APA's Same-Sex Marriage Resolution*,[15] which has an introductory subtitle, "*All on the APA's working committee knew the outcome they supported before they started 'working.' The committee should have been called the 'Same-Sex Marriage & Parenting Advocacy Committee.'*" *Id.* He writes, "The APA committee lacked diversity and never sought a consensus from its membership." *Id.* No poll was ever taken of the 150,000 members about same-sex marriage and parenting. Rather, *see id.*, the APA's resolution was drawn up by 6 committee members and recommended to the Council of Representatives, consisting of 160 members, and by a show of hands, the resolution passed, and the official APA statement made public.

V. SILENCING OUR VOICES

If anything hurts the feelings of our GLBT parent(s) and their partners, does not support same-sex marriage and parenting, it is often edited out of books, essays, and same-sex parenting studies. The special-interest groups ignore the horrendous inequality, permanent losses and prejudice to

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[15] Warren Throckmorton, *On the APA's Same-Sex Marriage Resolution*, NARTH Bulletin, p. 17 (Dec. 2004).

children in the name of adult sexual rights. They can attempt to silence, intimidate and threaten dependent children, teens and adults.

Thus, most adult children from gay households do not feel safe or free to publicly express their stories and life-long challenges; they fear losing professional licenses, not obtaining employment in their chosen field, being cut off from some family members, or losing whatever relationship they have with their gay parent(s). Some gay parents have threatened to leave no inheritance, if we aren't supportive of certain partners.

We tend to underestimate the impact of our parent(s)' sexual relationships while we are in our twenties and thirties, since we still feel a sense of obligation to protect our parent(s) and their partners; additionally, we can naively think that we can overcome the extraordinary losses and various traumas and leave the past behind us. Family secrets are difficult to divulge, so we often will only say what seems positive and uplifting about our situation growing up. It is easier to lie and pretend it wasn't all that bad. We realize that some gay couples may not act like our fathers; however, more of them do than the public might suspect.

To get a sense of how much we can talk about our upbringings, the questions you need to ask us as children and adults are: 1. How old are you? 2. Are you still living at home or attending college? 3. How close (emotionally and geographically) are you to your parent(s) and their partner(s)? 4. Are you afraid your parent(s)' and their partner(s)' feelings will be hurt if you tell the truth like it is? 5. Are your

parent(s) politically active? 6. What could you lose if you tell the full truth? 7. Are your parent(s) and/or their partner(s) still alive?

There are necessary unique intrinsic values, responsibilities and obligations in man-woman marriage which benefit children and society which cannot be duplicated in other family structures. Please do not deprive children of their rights to know and be raised by their biological father and mother.

VI. GROWING UP IN A TRANSGENDER HOUSEHOLD: DENISE SHICK

My name is Denise Shick. My father was what is now called "transgender". When I was 9 years old, he told me he was "really a woman." Though my mother tried to protect her children, she was unable to protect me. It is my hope by speaking out that I am able to protect other children whose voices are silenced by the LGBT and others. My father's sexually driven desires and behaviors were more than just confusing to me—they also were emotionally, and sometimes physically painful for me, as I will detail in this document.

For children's sake, marriage must remain as an institution that unites one man to one woman, each fully committed to the other, and together committed to the well-being of their family. Marriage is about more than procreation. A solid, committed marriage relationship provides a solid foundation for the children. Family are where children learn who they are and where they came from—not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. Family provides a

key level of discernment about humanity, from beginning to end.

Despite the increasingly common view that family is any group of people sharing common living quarters, real family is much more than that. Family is a place where life skills and virtues are modeled for children. The best role modeling for children comes from a real father and a real mother committed to one another. *Please do not let policies that affect the Nation be based on what is less then the best for children.* If we offer something less than the best, we as a country should be ashamed and prepared to face its consequences.

A. SOME LGBT ACTIVISTS WANT MY VOICE SILENCED

The Transgender lobby is almost exclusively males, like my father. Some are violent. I have on occasion been asked to speak publicly. When I have spoken my testimony, I have been called a "selfish daughter" or a "Bitch." As I sat, waiting my turn to give a testimony in Maryland, a m-to-f transgender purposely stepped on the top of my feet with his high heeled boots, then chuckled as he passed me. I can assure you that the transgender who dug into the top of my feet with his high heels did so on purpose. I have never been hateful towards those who have a different view or experience, and I expect the same in return. But this has not been my experience when speaking publicly.

Also, in the past, I had confronted a supervisor who wanted hugs before leaving work. Soon after this, it appeared that she discovered the fact that I

spoke out about my personal experience with my dad. The supervisor would taunt me. At one point, she made the statement, "I went to a transgender fundraiser and I was so jealous of their high heels and purses." My co-workers were confused about how I was treated by her, as I did not speak about my employment. Shortly afterwards, a number of events took place and I was informed that my supervisor had a sister who identifies as homosexual, and has a wife.

During my supervisor's retirement party, she walked over to where I was sitting and placed her hands on my knee, making the statement, "Consider this a knee hug." When did it become wrong for an adult child or a minor to speak out about their experiences with a homosexual or transgender parent? After all, isn't this what the issue is all about, the children?

B. MY TOXIC HOME ENVIRONMENT

My dad created an environment in which everyone in our home walked on pins and needles. He was very particular and would complain or yell at me every chance he could. For example, one evening, he decided to inspect the dishes I had just washed. He found a spoon with some food on it. Needless to say, that was all he needed. Before long, he smacked my face so hard that my glasses went flying to the floor and left my cheek beet red. He treated all his children in this overbearing manner. He was miserable and he wanted everyone around him to share in his misery. I don't remember a day that he seemed happy or smiled. Laughter and joy were not part of his or my life.

My siblings and I learned early on to be as invisible as possible, which frequently meant spending long hours in our bedrooms, often alone, especially when he had fallen asleep while drinking. I learned that when he was drunk, we could do little more than whisper to one another while we hid away. Any noise might disturb him, and a disturbance likely meant him bursting through the door, belt in hand, fury written across his face.

He needed no reason to come after us with his thick, black belt; it was if another personality came out and we were simply the most convenient targets to take his rage out on. As the oldest child, I began to watch for signs that he might be ready to explode. When I saw the signs, I quickly gathered my little siblings and ushered them in a closet or out of the house if time allowed us to hide until his rage subsided. Sadly, I was not always successful in detecting his impulsive outbursts. After the whippings, I was never sure what hurt more, the welts on our behinds or watching him and hearing his maniacal chuckles after he'd hit his own children.

When I was nine years old, Dad's abuse took a new turn—it became psychological. He took me out to a knoll in the yard, alone, and as we sat there he told me he wanted to become a woman. My nine-year-old psyche was incapable of processing such a statement. I tried to imagine not having a father, but instead having two mothers. It made no sense. I felt utter rejection and abandonment. I wanted to run away, but I could not think of anywhere to go. Despite his mistreatment of my siblings and me, I still wanted a dad, and a real-dad-and-mom

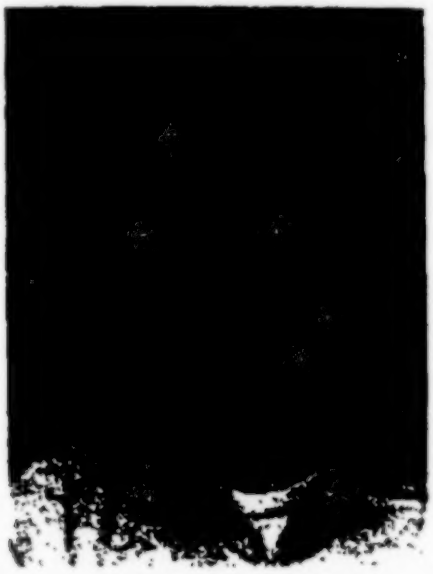
household, just like many of the neighborhood kids had—like it was supposed to be. It was a natural need and desire, but he couldn't seem to grasp my needs.

Denise as a young girl of five years

As a nine-year-old, I tried to process his opening statement and his subsequent monologue only sporadically penetrated my conscious thoughts. Yet another statement he made was even more confusing for a child of 9, "When you see me with my legs crossed, as a woman does when wearing a dress, you'll know I'm feeling like a woman." Ever since then, any time I see a man with his legs crossed as a woman does when wearing a dress, I remember my dad's words clear as a bell, and the memories come

flooding back. And, I wonder if that man wants to be a woman also? Words like these do not leave a child's memory and do impact one's life.

He become hateful towards me as I grew up to be exactly what he wanted, and that was to be "a girl". The envy grew as I grew, making my life miserable. He lived in his own little world, while ignoring the needs of those around him.



Denise's father as a man

At times I would have to pour water on my cereal because he spent milk and other grocery monies to buy his clothes. As a child I did without; however, my dad always had his stash of clothes, jewelry and meals out. Today, children are hearing the message that their needs don't count; only the needs of their parents matter. This is a deranged way to raise children. As I tried to process that revelation, he blindsided me with another: he never wanted to have children. He was telling me that my siblings and I

were mistakes and did not align with his "wants" in life. It was if the wind was knocked out of me and any hope I had of him loving me was gone. Again, he spoke words that a child does not forget.

C. MY MOM WAS DEVALUED

Dad also revealed to me that he forced my mother to buy him women's underwear and bras. Her emotional status and integrity meant nothing to him. My mother stopped wearing lipstick, and lost the desire to look attractive. My dad devalued my mom and what it was to be a woman and his wife. Her personhood was sucked up like that of a vacuum. She was made to work when my baby sister was only one year old in order to provide food for us children, and to provide clothes on our backs. My mom's environment caused her to suffer from constant migraines, depression, anxiety and isolation. When a woman marries a man and has a family, it is reasonable for her to expect that she will not be forced into living someone's sexual fetish for the rest of her life 24/7.

D. BECOMING MY DAD'S VICTIM

As I grew and developed, he frequently fondled me. He had a deep envy of my female body. Even if I ran from him, he'd chase me down, tackle me to the ground, and indulge in his sick fantasies. He laid right on top of my back, then wrapped his arms around my sides to grab hold of my breasts and start to squeeze them so tight that it hurt. I screamed to no avail and would eventually squirm away from him. It was as if he thought that by laying his body on top of mine, he could fantasize about my breasts

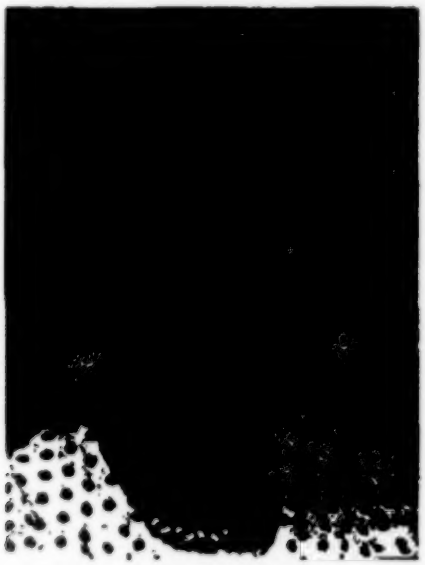
belonging to him on his body. A neighbor saw his disgusting behavior and informed my mom. She and I discussed the possibility of going to live with my grandmother, but we never did. I knew I needed to stop this cycle of abusing children, and it would stop with me. I made a personal vow to not be like my dad in any way with my own children.

As time passed, Dad's obsession with buying women's clothing escalated, and so did the bills to pay for it. Even with both parents working, bill collectors were constantly calling as Dad continually bought more mail-order and store-bought night gowns, bras, panties, jewelry, and makeup. My mom tried the best she could to provide for her children. She did her best to provide for us. But it simply was not enough with my dad's compulsive spending on his womanizing items of every description. He was obessive and compulsive; he clearly was financially irresponsible and remained so. Though family funds were often low and out, my dad would visit a local bar dressed in drag, wearing a red wig.

As an adolescent, I had to be very careful about how I dressed, worrying that an ill-chosen outfit might trigger an appalling response from my father. At one point, I began to hate my developed body as it was the very thing he wanted most. When I began wearing makeup, I had to block out lurid pictures of my dad applying the makeup to his just-shaved face. Often I wondered if he would like the same color of eye shadow or lipstick. Slowly I realized that he was destroying my desire to be a woman and I could not enjoy being a girl in my home; it wasn't safe around

my dad. I didn't want to have breasts. My breasts had proven to be too dangerous because of his envy for the very body parts I was born with.

I reached the teenage and young misses clothing size—and with the budget so strained, Dad had to cut back on the mail orders of women's clothes—so he began "borrowing" my clothing, including my underwear, bras and bathing suit! I often found articles of my clothing in places I would not have put them, such as the attic, in between the bathroom towels, or even in the cab of his pickup truck. I quickly learned how to arrange my clothing to help me know if he had been in my dresser drawers. The man's obsession knew no bounds, and it often made me emotionally ill.



Denise's father as "Becky"

The obsession escalated further still. On more than one occasion, when only my father and I were home, I heard noises from my brother's bedroom, which shared a common wall with the bathroom—

the bathroom I used for showering or changing clothes. On one of those occasions, I decided to investigate. I found a hole in the wall. I saw an eye peering through. My own father was watching me shower and dress. I just wanted to curl up and die. I had no safe place in our home. This was a proven factor in my life time and time again.

One evening, when a friend was visiting, as we sat on the floor watching TV, Dad sat down on the couch nearby. In only a matter of moments, Dad opened the fly of his pajamas, and in full view of my friend and me, began fondling himself. I was horrified and sat in silence, hoping my friend would by some chance not see what he was doing. From that time on, I knew it was unsafe to ever bring a friend home in my mother's absence. My life revolved around my dad. What was safe to wear? Where was it safe to be? And I knew it was not an option any longer to bring any friends home.

Despite my earlier resolve to break the cycle of abuse, eventually the depravity took its toll. As a teenager, I began drinking heavily. High school bathrooms and homes of friends had proven to be successful places to engage in this behavior. I discovered a deep longing I had for masculine love and attention which I failed to receive from my dad. I became flirtatious with those whose attention I tried to gain. I had 13 different boyfriends by the end of seventh grade alone. At one point, I narrowly escaped being raped. I wanted what so many of my friends had, a real dad, but I had to settle for an emotionally non-existent and unloving father. I reached a point of contemplating suicide. The only

thing that stopped me from committing such an act, was the fear of not being successful and ending up being in a wheelchair or bedridden the rest of my life.

When boyfriends came by to take me out, Dad's smiles were overtly feminine and flirtatious. Each time I prayed that the boy would not notice, but I always feared they did. While on the phone with a boy, he would quickly click the receiver down. After I returned from dates, Dad's envy was always evident. He became very angry at me and started fights on purpose when I came home. His resentment for me being a girl was clear. He wanted to be me and wanted my life; he was suffocating me. His envy turned into resentment and hostility.

During my senior year in high school, I was engaged to be married. We planned the wedding for shortly after graduation. However, my home life was still a mess. So I eagerly counted the months and days, waiting for the day when I would be out of this toxic home.

On my wedding day, dressed in the gown my mother sewed for me, and with the guests seated in the church sanctuary, it was time for the wedding party to proceed. My dad and I were alone at the end of the hall as he was to walk me down the aisle. Just before the procession, he looked at me eye to eye and said, "I wish it were me in that dress." Really? Are you kidding me? I thought. I'm preparing to walk down the aisle to be married and my father tells me he wants to take my place, in my wedding dress, to marry my soon-to-be husband. I had to pretend I hadn't heard him to survive one more time. I told

myself, just walk down the aisle. Part of me wanted to run, run, run, away from him, right then and there—never to see him again. He stole my special day and made it all about him and his self-centered desires once again. Needless to say, when I had children I could not trust him with them.

I was 28 years old when Dad decided to leave my mother and fully pursue his "dream life" as a woman, and begin relationships with other men. To me he was "Dad." Some have accused me of being insensitive or disrespectful of my dad's desires. Simply writing that sentence required some deep reflection and introspection. Even if I had acquiesced and addressed him (her) as "Becky", doing so would not have changed his relationship to me. "He was my father, the one whose seed implanted me in my mother's womb." (Shick)[16]

Thirteen years later, my mother told me my dad was dying. My father died six months later, but not before I had many opportunities to talk with him as an adult and try to understand his pain through eyes of compassion and love. The undeniable truth was that, no matter what he'd put me through, he was still my dad. No matter how much I tried to hate him for being the disastrous father he'd been, I still loved him. I realized that children don't get to pick their parents, however, we do choose whether to love them or not. More difficult days were ahead, however, as I cleaned his home after his death. As I walked up the

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[16] Denise Shick, *Daughter of LGBT Family Pleads for Calm after Alcorn Suicide*, American Thinker, Feb. 2, 2015, http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2015/02/daughter_of_lgbt_family_pleads_for_calm_after_alcorn_suicide.html.

hallway, I saw that mirrors were mounted on each wall. At the top of the stairs, the room on the right was filled with dolls, and with boxes of letters from and to his male companions. Reality hit me right in the face—in black and white.

As I read those letters, I again felt like that bewildered child like so many years ago. I never wanted two moms. I'd always wanted a mom and dad. I needed a mom and a dad. I wanted my dad to teach me how to dance. I wanted my dad to teach me what to look for in a future husband. I wanted my dad not to envy who or what I was, but rather to treasure me as his little girl. I wanted my dad to embrace me as a daughter. My hunger for a dad was not selfish; it was the true need of a child. Without him as a fatherly presence, I missed out on what life was really meant to be with him.

As a child I was deprived of not only a father's love, but also of a father's affirmation of his daughter. My dad had no concerns about his family's basic needs. Instead, he focused on his selfish obsessions and needs. The sad irony was that in the end, when he got what he thought he'd always wanted, he still never achieved happiness and satisfaction. He was sad to the very end of his life. In my own father's words, "Change my house many times, change, change, change, change. Yet, I am missing something, the something is completeness."

E. THE IMPACT ON MY LIFE

While growing up in our home, I became a caretaker for my mom, as she became ill often due to the stress she was lived under. By third grade, I also

became the main care-taker of my siblings since my mother worked the afternoon shift. I had to be the responsible one since my dad was not interested in nor capable of the job.

I felt dirty, guilty and uncomfortable about being a girl. I hated my developing body as I started to grow breasts and my hips became curved. I had a strong dislike toward menstrual cycles as they served as a constant reminder of what my dad wanted to be: a woman. I, along with my mom, lost the desire to be women. I felt devalued as a girl, as a daughter and then as a woman. I had to become what everyone else needed and many times lost my identity in the process. It was if a quiet pact had been made by my parents and me. If anyone came to visit our family, relatives included, reality was not spoken of, while smiles and pleasantries were exchanged: leaving most people clueless to the reality we lived in.

Our society is coming to promote the view that children don't need a dad and a mom. This simply is not the truth. My father abandoned his role as a father, and I can tell you that I missed out on the one thing I most deeply needed and desired. I searched high and low for a substitute father to help fill the void. I struggled with unworthiness, feeling that I did not deserve the love of a father. I had low esteem and struggled to believe in myself until years later, after much healing from my childhood wounds. In some ways, you could say that it seemed like I was raised in a single-parent home, my mother being the main caretaker. While in her absence, due

to work, I was being emotionally abused and mistreated by my babysitter, my dad.

I don't want any other child to endure a home life like the one I endured. The most basic need—the fundamental right—of any child is to have a real father and a real mother, committed to one another in marriage, and committed unreservedly to the well-being of their children. Redefining marriage would create a missing component of what a child's greatest need is. It also is denying a child the right to a mother and a father, and if we do that, as a country we will no longer be interested in the kind of world we are leaving to the next generation, and the generation after that. By redefining marriage, the country will be saying to a child, "what you need does not matter". I end with a quote from Marian Wright Edelman: "If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."[17]

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We two *amicae* are presenting real stories of our own lives and of other lives of which we have heard. We are not claiming that all homosexual parents or transgender parents will act in ways as abusive as our parents treated us. However, we believe that a larger number of gay or transgender parents behave in similarly abusive ways to the ways our parents mistreated us, than the public might believe based on the fashionably sanitized, laudatory image that

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[17] *Available at*, e.g., Jonathan Lockwood Huie, Positive Quotes (undated), http://www.quotes-positive.com/quote/stand-up-children-then-much-90/ (last visited March 21, 2015).

the mass media, and gay-marriage advocacy groups, often present of gay or gender-crossing parents.

These days, gay or transgender lifestyles are often presented as being a sort of substitute sainthood, and a license for endless grievances which have to be kowtowed to without question. Some would-be pundits even fantasize that same-sex parenting is somehow *better*, more "modern", "tolerant", and "progressive", than traditional man-and-woman parenting. But not all children of same-sex parents end up as Rhodes Scholars, Olympic gold medalists, or junior Mother Teresas; various studies have shown that children of same-sex parents end up worse off than children of traditional, diverse-gender parents. We ourselves certainly ended up worse-off, in many ways, than most children of traditional parents would tend to become.

And not all same-sex parents are paragons of decency, even if some of them are conventionally high-achieving people (and some of those have served as "perfect plaintiffs" in various same-sex-marriage lawsuits). Even those same-sex parents with fine intentions and fine résumés are not able to do the impossible: how can a man serve as a female role model to a little girl? In fact, as much as Denise loved her father, his attempt to enter a fantasized "female identity" was disastrous and incredibly destructive. And as much as Dawn loved her father, his lifestyle risked serving as a "familial role model" for sodomy and other dangerous practices.

(One source of enlightenment is Sonia Sotomayor, *My Beloved World* (paperback ed., Vintage Books 2014 (2013)), the photograph subtitled, "Trying very hard at age four to match Mami's glamour, both of

us dressed in new hats for Easter", at the bottom left-hand corner of the seventh page of photographs following p. 246 of written text. *Id.* So, *see id.*, Sonia's mother was a role model in how to dress, with high sartorial standards. That being so, we think it is more than reasonable to assume that a mother, as with Mrs. Sotomayor, could do a better job of modeling women's clothing for children, and performing as a female role model in general, than could a man dressed up in women's clothing (like Denise's father), or any man, period. A man is not a woman, even if he thinks he is one. If this Court attempts to erase gender, that Sisyphean project may have no better result in the long run, than does any other attempt to pretend Nature does not exist.)

Reality has limits that fantasy and irresponsiblity simply cannot go beyond. Therefore, the people of every State have a right, even a responsibility, to protect public health, the general welfare, and the good of children by not extending marriage beyond its traditional, natural, healthy definition.

CONCLUSION

We, Dawn Stefanowicz and Denise Shick, respectfully ask that the Court support that marriage needs to remain a societal foundation that constitutes, represents, and defends the inherently procreative relationship between the husband and the wife for the welfare of their biological children and society; and respectfully ask the Court to uphold the judgment of the court of appeals. We humbly thank the Court for its time and consideration.

March 24, 2015 Respectfully submitted,

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